



**Ruby Hill Neighbors**

March 4, 2021

Mayor Michael B. Hancock  
Denver City Council  
City and County of Denver  
1437 Bannock St, Rm 350  
Denver, CO 80202

**Re: Flavored Tobacco Products in Denver**

Honorable Mayor Hancock and Councilmembers,

On behalf of Denverites across the Mile High City, thank you for your leadership and service. Denver's registered neighborhood organizations share a commitment to protect Denverites and promote the health and well-being of communities. In 2020, each of our organizations came together and adopted resolutions encouraging you to take action and protect young people—including those from historically marginalized communities—from flavored tobacco products in the City and County of Denver.

Gummy bear-flavored e-cigarettes, cotton-candy vapes and grape flavored cigars are intended to attract kids, and once they try flavored tobacco products they are more likely to get hooked on nicotine and struggle with a lifelong addiction. Consider, for example, cigars are sold in more than 250 flavors—like *Banana Smash* or *Cherry Dynamite*—that attract youth and mask the unpleasant, harsh taste of tobacco. E-cigarettes are available in more than 15,000 flavors including with branding and packaging reminiscent of sugar-packed snacks of our own childhoods like kid-friendly flavors like cotton candy, gummy bear and pink lemonade.

Each day, more than 1,900 kids in the United States try their first cigarette; menthol, in particular, cools and numbs the throat and reduces irritation, making menthol cigarettes an appealing option for youth who are initiating tobacco use. African American and the LGBTQ+ community is more likely to smoke menthol cigarettes at a rate of 85% and 36% respectively.

The explosion of new tobacco products and flavors is undermining the progress Denver has made working

collaboratively to invest in public health programs, promote the city's healthy quality of life, and work to achieve better health care outcomes through the city. We have the opportunity at the local level to protect future generations from lung cancer, heart disease, COPD and other smoking-related illnesses in adulthood. We can do better. Denver deserves better.

While tobacco companies target everyone, Denver's Black, Latinx and LGBTQ+ kids are disproportionately impacted. Please show that you value the health of ALL Denver kids over tobacco and vape retailers' profits. Our kids' health is on the line.

Our organizations, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Lung Association, American Heart Association, the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, One Colorado, NAACP, Colorado Black Health Collaborative, Denver Health, Children's Hospital of Colorado, National Jewish, Healthier Colorado, and many more city in this important work. And, we look forward to working with you to do the right thing and end the sale of flavored tobacco products in Denver.

Sincerely,

Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods

Greater Park Hill Community Association

Jefferson Park United Neighbors

Montbello 2020

Northeast Park Hill Coalition

Overland Park Neighborhood Association

Ruby Hill Neighbors

Sloan's Lake Citizens' Group

*Attachment: Flavors Hook Kids RNO Resolution*